Application of Western Science

TO

Oriental Philosophy

BY

SWAMI AGEHANANDA BHARATHI
Benares Hindu University

Gopal Bagh 21—6—53 Coimbatore

Introductory Speech by

Dr. P. SUBBAROYAN

21—6—'53.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Swamiji is going to talk to you on problems of modern life whether what our ancients thought could be applied properly to modern conditions. Swamiji had been a student of Indian philosophy and has begun to understand the environment in which our philosophical thought grew, because I am one of those who think that critics of our way of life in the West have not really understood the principles under which our way of life or philosophy of life grew. And I am one of those who think that only those, who have come into this country and come into contact with the way of life, —but not merely by the study of our thought which is very easy because there had been many western savants — have understood our way of life. One of the most prominent names I know is Paul Deussen who never visited this country, though he understood the philosophy of Vedanta in all its essentials. But there are others who have devoted numbers of years in this country learning the language specially Sanskrit because Sanskrit is the basis of all our ancient philosophy.

I am not forgetting for the moment which I know my Tamil friends might get annoyed with, the contribution of Tamil to modern thought but at the same time as far as the West is concerned, they have come into contact with Indian life and Indian thought only through the medium of Sanskrit, and I am sure even those ardent lovers of Tamil like myself will not contradict me when I say that Sanskrit is the mother of all languages, though Tamil had its own contribution to make. Swamiji the other day when he met me, said he was interested in the Sivasiddandha philosophy and the works of our own saints both Alwars and Samayacharias and he is now trying to learn Tamil in order to get himself to understand the basic principles underlying the culture of this part of India because in some ways we differ from the Sanskritic culture, if I may put it in that way. But all the same, as far as the world is concerned, the world knows only our Sanskrit culture, our great contribution to world thought through the Vedantha and what Huxley called the perennial philosophy of life, and therefore I would like you to listen to what Swamiji has got to say and how our thought which is ancient can be applied to modern conditions. I will now request Swamiji to talk to you.

Speech by

SWAMI AGEHANANDA BHARATHI

Benares Hindu University

on 21—6—'53

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to address a few words to you and I also promised some friends of mine here, that I will try not to be too academical because that would bore you, and I hate very much to bore my audiences, though I am, of course, by profession, so to speak, a philosopher in the modern sense that I teach philosophy of various kinds. It is not my object today to talk to you on a system or systems of philosophy but as our President told you, I will try to fulfil, namely, I shall try to elaborate for you certain aspects of Indian culture, certain vista of ancient Indian thought as well as certain points in connection therewith brought forth by modern western thought and we shall try to see how a kind of combination or asseveration of those two different kinds of thought can help you to build up a happy modern life. That means the life of a happy individual in happy society. This is of course what most philosophers and social reformers claim.

They want to give you something pragmatic, they want to give you something practical. Along with their systems of speculation they want to tell you how you can apply certain tenets of their thoughts to your everyday life.

Now, you will often wonder how it is that in this country of India which is your country as well as mine, which is a country of high intellects, a country of high spiritual and intellectual achievement, this country has so far lagged behind the other countries in those accomplishments which we might roughly classify as material. Well, this surrounding is, I think, very congenial to what I want to tell you; that is, round you, you have got beautiful machines. I don't think I understand a hundredth of what they stand for. I have to be told but even then I don't think I would make much out of them but one thing, I think, I do know about them and that is the principle of their necessity. You see we find that in India, let us say the last 20 or 30 years, there has been many a religious or spiritual teacher. They were revered teachers who have kept claiming and propagating that these modern achievements, these technical aids and equipments stood against our spiritual advancement, that they are in the long run responsible and accountable for all those mishaps and

sinister events that are about to cloud this world and have clouded it certainly enough in the last 2 or 3 decades.

Now I believe, ladies and gentlemen, that this aspersion of thought to modern science is entirely wrong, for certain reasons. I would just give you one of them, the one which I think, is most readily apprehendable. That is, that if, for instance, you hold that the invention of the atom or the hydrogen bomb provokes war and that if you therefore infer that the scientists should not be believed or that their work should not be sponsored, your fallacy and the fallacy of all those who preach that, is that they confuse two different instances in history. That is, all those institutions which we decry as war and so on, have been there long previous to any scientific research. We know after all that the caveman was not at all a peaceful being but he was rather more aggressive than any of us now can easily conceive. Now, all these things as warfare, homicide and all those crimes and difficulties that have cropped up, well, they are presupposed in order that such achievement as the atom bomb may come into effect. So, it is not with the thought of war, that things such as the atom and so on, are being investigated. There is no doubt that a good radio, a good

motor, a good television set in the long run are used for warfare but does that mean that therefore we should get rid of television and that we should get rid of machinery? I think this is simply foolhardiness; because war is older than all that. So our natural endeavour should be to abolish war and not science. Science came much later than warfare. That is only one thing.

Now as Hindus, or rather let us say, as Indians, we have imbibed the culture of the soil. Is it for you then, to either flop everything that is given to you by your tradition and take to something which is entirely new, or is it better to abandon from the outset everything that is new and stick to the old traditions? Now you find, ladies and gentlemen, that in present day India among intellectuals I mean to say, this is precisely the one great controversy. The older generation and the newer generation speak a different language. That does not mean to say they speak a different language philologically. Both the father and son or, let us say, the parent generation and the son generation, may talk Tamil or Hindustani or anything, yet they speak another language because the connotations of most of their words and sentences have had completely changed. Why is that so? Owing to the same or rather a similar fallacy. Some

believe that if something is wrong about a state of affairs, then the cause must lie in everything that brought the state about. Therefore, the orthodox Indian, whether he be a Christian, or a Hindu or a Muslim or a Buddhist or a Jain, that makes no difference at all, the orthodox man, the traditionalist believes he has to stick to tradition and exclude from it what comes from the new times. The moderner, (what you call the moderner with a newly coined English word which did not exist in the Oxford Dictionary) the moderner, that means the man who lives in this modern age and applies himself to modern equipments and achievements, the moderner will try to flout what tradition gives him and then there had been those teachers, as for instance, Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda who told you and have told us very significantly that we somehow can avail ourselves of the modern age and its achievements and at the same time stick to our old ideals. Now, if that were quite so easy as it sounds, of course, it would be the ideal solution.

The question is, is it possible to be traditionalists and at the same time avail ourselves successfully of what is modern and uptodate? Well, I believe that is possible but not so simple as it sounds from

those teachers. You see, we have heard and that is a very very general and sweeping statement which I have encountered from people who are real good thinkers; they say that Indian culture is essentially spiritualistic, western culture is essentially materialistic. I never quite saw what was meant by those two terms but it obviously meant that the westerner prefers to go in for comfort and luxury and the easterner is fonder of spiritual ecstacy and renunciation. Well, I am afraid that as the statement is put, it is simply jejune for we know that there had been very great renouncers, so-called spiritualists in the West as the Christian saints and Socrates and the Greek priests or Grecian philosophers who sacrificed quite a lot for what they considered to be true and there had been materialists in India; I don't mean only *Chartrika.* Some of you might think that. You just read the Arthashastra of Kautilya. You just have a look into the ancient Indian literature. You will find there such institutions as are now-a-days despised and derogated by the present traditionalists and they are beauty aids, beauty competitions, meat eating etc.; all these things have been present and available in India and are easily traceable provided you really go, not into what people wrote about Sanskrit literature in

English but in ancient Sanskrit literature you will find that perhaps there is nobody in the world who did enjoy life so thoroughly and scientifically and magnanimously as the ancient Indian did. I can't elaborate and express more than that. That would take us too far but to say that the Indian is from the outset, fond of tapasya and nothing else and the westerner is from the outset fond of the opposite, is simply a wrong statement. There have been both spiritualists and there have been both materialists, here and there.

Now, I will tell you something which to those among you who are fond of what is generally termed spirituality, that is the method of worshipping God or any conceived deity in the way elaborated by so many people who profess to do it, not only Sanyasins who wear this garb, those of the Christian priests and Mohammadan Mullahs and so on, everybody who is a professional religionist will tell you and has told you in so many hundreds of years that the ways of the world and the ways of the beyond are mutually exclusive. Now, if you follow up this matter historically, yau will find that it was always said in a particular surrounding and environment. India is a poor country today, a statement which is self-evident, and doesn't have to

be substantiated, but it was not always a poor country. The reason was merely negative, the population was not so great but that only by the way. Those great tyagis or yogis, those who preached the life of renunciation or in latin term the *Vita Contemplativa* that means the life of theoretical contemplation, what we call the life of mystic union, those people lived at a time when the other pursuits of life, namely, the pursuits of enjoyment or what in the Sanskrit term is called "Pravritti" as opposed to "Nivritti". Do not forget, ladies and gentlemen, that the greatest of our Rishis and Yogis that India ever bore, were rich, eminent and successful householders. I regard, for instance, Buddha as the greatest man who ever lived in the spiritual realm. Buddha was the son of a King. He himself was observed as a king, though the group of families or Raja families to which he belonged, were rather extensive Zamindars. He was very wealthy. He had all that life had to give. So there are the others. Read, the original *Smiriti* and the *Upanishads*. You will find that philosophic discussion and the spiritual life is entertained by those who have had the enjoyment of the fullest life.

I will try to directly take you into the present state of affairs. Now-a-days, as I

said India is a poor country, so naturally the propensity of the individual is to make a virtue out of the vice. Poverty is a vice. We know that in the wider context. But as nothing is there, you make something your principle for which actually and morally you have no justification. That is what Swami Vivekananda once aptly called the *Shmashana Vairagya*. That means you have nothing to renounce because you are poor anyway. You are kicked by fortune, you are not successful in life, so you become a Tyagi; his Guru Ramakrishna once gave an apt illustration when he narrated the story of a jackal that was running behind a tiger or a leopard or whatever that big animal was, in the hope to get some of the morsels left over by the bigger animal. But incidentally, the bigger animal was very hungry, it seemed. It finished everything and did not even spare the bones. The jackal was very disappointed and then proclaimed: "Alright, I will renounce it". Renunciation is something which must have an object. This is a matter which is not usually understood now-a-days and I hold this responsible for all the intellectual upset which we have here in India. Why? The Sanskrit verb "*Tyaktum*" means to renounce something. That is what in grammar we call a transitive verb. A Transitive verb is a

verb which requires an object as when I say, "*Pashyami Kinchit*" I see *something* or I renounce *something* but unless I have *something* to renounce there is no renunciation. It is only fraud.

95% of all the people in India who wear this Kashya robe are frauds. You don't know that because you are South Indians and there is no system of "*Biksha*" down here; that means the system of living on a pretext; and because that pretext is cherished within the realm of the holy tradition of this country, the robe stands for the man. That is something which has ruined the country. In South India, you don't have this system but between Benares and Hardwar, there are, at least 9 to 10 lakhs of people who wear this robe or a similar one and just by the fact of their wearing this robe, they are honoured. But what is behind them? Check thoroughly as psychologists and other scientists and as a detached person, the average man who claims to be a Tyagi, who claims to have renounced. What has he now, what did he have before? Before that, he was a clerk who earned Rs. 50/- and he had an ever increasing family with about 7 or 8 ever growing; and of course the salary doesn't increase along with it and the people at home are not too kind. The

world is all-grief for him, there is not much else in it. So, he runs away and takes Diksha and becomes a sanyasi. Then what happens? He goes to Hardwar. He is fed twice a day; not very well, of course; he gets his Roti and Dal, but sumptuously, he can eat to his heart's content, but it doesn't stop there. The ladies come and bring him flowers and fruits and say, 'Maharaj' with folded hands, and the Marwaris and other people come and propitiate and then the man all on a sudden, from a nincompoop turns into a king. The very fact that he is addressed as Maharaj means that. Now that is very significant. Now-a-days people becomes Tyagis in order to enjoy life, relatively speaking. That is something very strange. But this is one of the typical incidents resulting from an utter confusion of issues.

Now coming back to our main issue, what is it which is typical for the Hindu and what is it that he has to take over into this present state of affairs, into the modern world? From the outset, I again claim that you will need all these things and many more of the things you see around here. You will need your atoms, not to make bombs but to enhance and further agriculture; you will need your heat, you will need your electricity. There is no use of

going back to anything more primitive. I am a great worshipper of Mahatma Gandhi, no doubt, but I never quite understood his preaching which urged us to go back to the more and more primitive tool as though that was the better one. We have found that from the moral point of view we have neither increased nor decreased in value since the cave-dweller; perhaps we have slightly refined our qualities. That is not the main thing. We have the spinning wheel, the electric spinning wheel. If you go back, why stop at the Charka? You have to go back to the cave in the long run, where you use furs and barks. All these things are here now and it is not sound and not possible either, to turn back the wheel of history.

Buddha went to preach his first lesson in Benares; setting out, he said in his Pali mother-tongue "*Dhammachakkham Pavassetum Gacchami Kashinam Purim Andha Bhutasmin Lokasmin Hancham Amata Dundubhim*". "I now go forth to Benares (because that was the centre of learning) and there I will give the wheel of this world another turn. I will turn it once more and it will be quickened to a higher speed. I will beat the drum of immortality". This is very significant and I think we should take his intention as a

guide, and cultivate it in our present time. We can't push the wheel back. There is our machinery, there are our tools, we have to avail ourselves of them. But can we then yet be Hindus or Christians or Traditionalists? Yes, we can be. And particularly as a Hindu preacher, I would tell you that precisely in this one basic teaching devised on the soil of India, as nowhere else, there is not only the possibility but actually the command to avail yourself of whatever is made available. How is that possible? That is possible on the one magnificent idea which has been formulated very very long time back and that is the notion of the four Purusharthas.

You know that for the Hindu as well as the Buddhist and the Jain, there are 4 Purusharthas in life. That means there are 4 objects of his human existence. Now you will find that in any other part of the world, philosophic and religious and political sects claim that there is only one object. The politicians for instance will give you a utilitarian claim, as Bentham did; in a contorted mould it is given by the Nazis and by the Communists. They are all politicians, they jettison all other prospects, they claim that there is but one aim of life i. e. a purely social one whatever that may be. Take, for instance, the utilitarian

dictum, the greatest good to the greatest number. That is a maxim. It is a sound principle but it would make us think, uphold and propagate that there is only one target in life and that is social uplift. Now, we notice that it is not sufficient.

Then take the religious extreme, for example, the Christians. I believe there are many Christians among you and most of you will not agree, I am ready to argue the point that Christ talked only for Sanyasis and not for house holders. Why? because you remember the story of the young man who came and asked him what he should do to be good; Christ told him, "you follow whatever the decalogue tells you, the commandments". The boy said, " I have been doing that all the time". Then Christ told him, "Well, if you want more, then you sell everything and follow me". Crucify the flesh with its desires as it is put in the oldish language. Well, there it is, Christ again for his followers, gave only one target in life and that was of course the extreme opposite of what the utilitarians or the politicians give; asceticism, the contemplation of God. Now you will see that though as instances, these two things are diametrically opposed, yet their method is the same, the method of those two being to have one aim in life.

That, as modern Psychology is more and more about to prove, is simply wrong. It is not in accord with the constitution of the human mind, of the human personality. What is congenial to it is something like a variation, a multifariousness of objects; which means to say that as the individual's age proceeds, ripens, matures and decays, so also do his targets. This is important and I believe that the oldest and soundest diction is given in our four "purusharthas".

You all know what those Purusharthas are, but I will try to tell you what I believe they stand for in the modern context and how they can be made use of by all of you and each and everyone who are Indians and who want to build up a modern and successful country which is not only so spritualistic that on the material side it lacks behind but that spiritually as well as materially will one day rank on a par with those countries which we believe and know to be ahead. That spiritully India may give the lead is a different thing. I don't discuss that here. It is quite possible. But I am afraid our attention is given too much to future possibilities and not to actualities.

What are those 4 purusharthas? You know they are Kama, Artha, Dharma and Moksha. It is enjoined by Manu

that a man must master progressively all the four spheres; unless he is an *adhikari* of the first sphere, he is not entitled to the second, unless he masters the first two purusharthas, he cannot enter the third and so on. What does that mean? It means the human being has to develop to their utmost capacity all those potentialities that are in him. Those potentialities are physical, intellectual, aesthetic and emotional.

If we are to stand as sound individuals in a sound society, we have, first, to have healthy bodies. That is a very important claim and I again come back to Swami Vivekananda who said, "It is more important for young Indians to play a game of football than to read the Bhagvad Gita". I quite agree. It is also important to read the Bhagvad Gita, no doubt, but I believe it is just as important or it is a predecessor to the reading of the Gita to play a good game of football. You don't have to play football, you can play cricket, you can do anything that will build up your body. Healthy food, healthy sleep and a healthy physical surrounding, that is the one main thing.

Intellectual development, that is already something far more difficult. Intellectual development does of course not

just mean to acquire a certain amount of reading. It means a method, it means an attitude, namely the critical approach. Intellectuality has only one contrary and that is superstition. Superstition, the other name of fanaticism. This might sound strange to you. How can superstition and fanaticism be identified? They can. In the last analysis, they are the same. What is a superstition? A superstition is anything, ladies and gentlemen, which you take for granted without checking it yourself by your discursive, intellectual effort. Any tradition given to you, any experience by another person which you yourself do not check up, all this is superstition, as you do not readily avail yourself of your critical faculties. So intellectuality means to check superstition by a critical approach.

Then the emotional development is something very important. There have been philosophers in the world who claimed that emotion was everything. There have been other philosophers in the world who claimed that intellect or ratio, reason was everything. Both of them, it has been amply proved, were wrong. It is true intellectuality to use emotion properly. It is true emotion to let intellect have its sway in all walks of life. So intellectuality and emotionality are not two disparate

things. You might call them the two sides of the same coin, the one checks the other but you cannot do without both. You have to study discursively, but also, you must have strongly developed emotions. Now, to develop your emotions, does not mean to say that you should become a drunkard or a debaucher; that has nothing to do with emotion. Emotionality is the training of all these faculties which make our life more beautiful.

All of you will agree or atleast philosophers agree that we should try to be good, good in the moral sense. We should not harm anybody. We should try to do such things as are helpful to ourselves and to society ; but there are fewer philosophers who have stated what is equally important: that apart from being good we must also try to achieve what makes our life beautiful. You see the ancient Greeks who were the fathers of Western culture said that the ideal state of affairs was what they called "*Kalokagathia*". It means that state of mind in which beauty and goodness play equal parts. I think this is something very wise. We have got Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram; the Deity is conceived as being existence, truth and beauty itself. You find similar trends all over the world.

I told you that you should develop the aesthetic side of life. What does that mean? Aesthetic comes from a Greek word *Aisthano*, which means "to apprehand", to see something, to feel something. Aesthetics plays a similar function as moral science. Moral science tell us which actions are good and which actions are bad. Aesthetics tells us which actions are ugly and which actions are beautiful. I give you a very simple example and you yourself will be able to ponder about it as my time is almost over. A doctor stands at the bed of his patient who is deadly sick from the medical point of view. The patient asks the doctor, "Well, Doctor, what is going to happen to me?". The Doctor knows well, as far as medical science goes, the man is bound to die within 2 or 3 days. Yet he tells him, "Oh, you will be out in 3 or 4 weeks and you will join your family again. You will be quite healthy and happy". Now from a narrow moralistic point of view, this is a lie. The doctor says it against his better knowledge. But suppose he had told him, "Well, you are going to die day after tomorrow, we are getting your coffin ready by now". In all probability that man will die because he will give up his hope. W know by now that a lot in medica treatment is psychology. The person who believes in the doctor, does a good deal to

come and meet him half way. Whereas the doctor who encounters no belief has a much harder and tougher job. So that is only one example. There are so many you can find yourself. There you have the clash between the good and the beautiful just to show you that it is not only the moral good which is important for tbe human being but also the aesthetic good.

As Indians, as Hindus, we have to see that all our individual development tends to fulfil all those 4 aims, those 4 purusharthas. Then and then only, can we claim to be complete human beings. This of course is easier said than done because you know that anybody who would radically follow the urges of Artha and Kama would end up in a lunatic asylum or jail or perhaps on the gallows. You know the story of Harischandra. A man who tries to be good, who tries to help mankind in a mood of self-righteousness will land himself in difficulties. Dharma alone is incomplete. About the other spheres as Kama and Artha, a person who tries to secure his enjoyment with the sole purpose of self-aggrandisement will meet obstacles. A person who tries to earn a decent livelihood even, will meet with jealousy and intrigue. You know that far better than I do. The claim of the philosopher, the claim of the

modern man is that by developing all his faculties harmoniously he can achieve something which might help this world get a better status.

Now, I would like you to stop pondering about what is going to happen in the sense of "will the world be destroyed, will we become communists, will we become extinct by the atom bomb, when is the war going to start". All these questions, ladies and gentlemen, are useless and senseless. If the atom will fall, well, you will either notice it or you won't notice it. You can't stop it. Whether the war would turn out one type of ideology or not, you can't know. Your job is to try to build yourselves into strong individuals.

Many of you may disagree but I believe that the Indian religions, the Indian philosophies have always been individualistic. What is individualism? Individualism simply means that you develop the individual because there is no guarantee that you can develop the community. Here is a good father and a very good mother; they give the utmost care to the children on whom they dote. They send them to the best schools, they send them to Cambridge and Harvard; they come back, and so often turn out to be failures. That need not

happen but it does happen. Where is all your education gone? Where are all your decent and sincere efforts gone? This is the frequent disappointment of the elders, that their offspring does not become as they supposed them to be or hoped them to be. That is why the wise man says the first job you have to do is to make yourself good and wise. If time remains to improve our neighbours as well, you may yet do it. But the first thing is to develop yourself and this is also clearly abundant. and evident because a society consists of individuals. We know that. A society is nothing which is something apart from its individuals except for a set of rules we agree to abide by. Well, those who gave those rules were individuals. Good individuals, a great number of individuals make a better society. A small number of individuals will, of course, lead to deterioration of society.

Now, winding up, I would say that what you actually have to do here is to learn what the modern world has to give; but do it in such a way that you do not feel that you lose ground. That is, of course, a negative injunction. I find that our modern students hang in the air, they float. They are no longer settled in the old tradition. They are not yet settled in the modern tradition because they see it from a

distance, except for those who go there and surrender to that particular type of civilisation or culture. I don't know whether they are better off. I believe you can achieve a happy individual as well as social life if you try as hard as possible to learn about all these things and apply them at the same time. Think what the old shastras told you, namely, not to go only for one aim of life but to go for all those 4 aims, those purusharthas successively. Go in for thorough enjoyment and for thorough control. Go in for being good citizens by a decent means of livelihood. Build a strong society. Go in for the pursuit of such values as are more abstract, on Dharma and Moksha, you have so many text books, you have so many Swamis, you have so many saints who will tell you how to meditate and how to worship.

Lastly, I would tell you that there is only one means to achieve all these things, to achieve success in this individual life, in the social life and if there is a life beyond in that too, that is discipline. Now I believe that this institution here from what bit I have seen is one of the few institutions which methodically enforce discipline. That is something which I am afraid is very rare in India and I hold this lack to be the only reason why India stands

behind other nations, in those achievements which we unwillingly covet. It is very typical, that in North India if you ask someone for a date and a time, he will more often than not reply, "*accha, my paunch che baje avunga*"; that means, "I will come at 5 o'clock". Now, what does that mean? Will he come at 5 or will he come at 6 o'clock? Well, usually he comes at 9 o'clock, if at all. That is the trouble about us. Punctuality is one thing, it is strict working out of a schedule with the flexibility not to let it be dull. All this is important and these things can be learnt through a strict discipline which must be enforced by the individual on himself, and voluntarily from a very early time.

It is necessary to study, it is necessary to work but it is also very necessary to criticize in the sense that we should use our intellectual faculties not to go in for superstitions, and superstitions are very very subtle at times. Superstitions are not only religious. If a black cat runs over the way and you frisk, that is a superstition, no doubt. When you don't proceed, you just spit twice on the floor and then you turn around and you go in another direction, that won't take you to your aim. Another superstition: Today a plane crashes on its way from Calcutta to Bombay, I booked

my seat for tomorrow, let us say from Madras to Bombay. I go by train. That is superstition because, according to the calculus of probability, the chance of another plane crashing the next day is small. Then we start arguing in another way. We say, "But look here, we read in the last 3 days there were 3 accidents on the railway lines all over India and about 2 big air disasters. So there must be some connection". From the very fact that there is a temporary proximity of certain happenings, you must not infer any rule and if you do that, it means you don't have the scientific mind, you don't have a disciplined mind. I don't say that astrology is no science. It is a very old science. But I claim that a person who takes his advice from astrology is not only ill-advised, he is immoral, even if predictions come true. If I have a ticket to Calcutta to fly and the stars tell me, there is some bad nakshathra in the way, and I don't fly, that is superstition. If a man believes in Astrology but does his actions according to his own schedule, then he is O. K. This is a hobby then rather than a superstition. To change your plans, to change the picture as you look at your life because of some extraneous influence, whatever that may be, supernatural or natural, that is superstition. Of that we have to get rid. Now I could

go on heaping all these examples on you but I don't want to do that.

I will just sum up but the purpose of this little talk is to tell you that as Hindus it is not necessary that we should skip our traditions. It is not then necessary that because we live in this modern world, we should completely give ourselves to that and abstain from what our fathers gave us. On the other hand it is quite as wrong, to flout what modern science gives us and try to go back to what was there before. That won't do. The way to it is, methodically, discipline; and intellectually we should learn to discriminate what is good and what is helpful and what has historically proved to be helpful in this country. I believe the great merit and the great credit that goes to Indian philosophy, is that it tells you that the ideals change and the purposes of life also change according to the growth of individual and the society. With these words, Mr. President, and ladies and gentlemen, I beg to take leave from you and I thank you very much for your attention. (Cheers).

Closing Speech of

DR. P. SUBBAROYAN

21—6—'53.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You are all now waiting, I know, to see the performance of Swami Hanumanthayya. I think that may be more interesting in some ways than what I am going to say, because seeing the nails eaten and crunched, and the blades and things like that will be of momentary interest. But, I cannot leave things unsaid.

There is one thing I want to say and that is this. Swamiji dealt with the invention of science and the atom bomb. I would like to tell him that is where the East and the West materially differ. We, in the East, have always believed that knowledge should be applied for the good of the people, and any scientific invention should be for making the life of the individual better than it was before such invention took place. I know most of the western scientists whom I have come across, some of the biggest atom scientists like Prof. Blackett who was one of those who worked in the laboratories before the atom

bomb was produced, agree with this view. They feel themselves guilty that they gave into the hands of humanity something which was going to lead to destruction and not to creation. But that is the essential difference between the East and the West.

The West has always been thinking in terms of exploitation, in spite of what Swamiji said about Socrates or even St. Francis of Assisi or Christ himself, as Gandhiji once said in a big meeting in South Africa, "If Christ himself appeared at a Church in any city in South Africa, say Cape Town or Johannesburg, he will be kept out of the Church because he was an oriental and had no place in the Church. The person who gave the religion in whose name you are practising the ideals of that religion still, that very person may be excluded from the church". That, I think, puts in a very short and pithy way the difference between the East and the West.

We have been a great nation once upon a time, before we were subjected. I know from my experience as Ambassador in Indo-nesia how we carried our culture by sailing boats, thousands of miles from this country and have left our impress on the Indonesian people but all the same, there has been no exploitation. But is there any

part of the world which the European has colonised and which he has not exploited? I give as one example. What is all this trouble in Indo-China today? It is because French imperialism refuses to trace its steps back. If France had been wise enough, I say this for the Englishman, if one of these people is wise enough to see when things come and are gone beyond him, he must retrace his steps in such a manner as to leave friendly relations, between the nation he governed and his own people. Such is not the case with European people unfortunately, whether you take Belgium, Portugal or France. They still want to hold on to what they have. They don't want to get away. That is where the trouble comes.

Why all this atom bomb, why this talk of putting atom bombs on cities? It is because you want to hold on to what you possess. If that sense of possession goes – and that is where I feel our philosophy is superior to that of the West–if once you give up the sense of possession and talk in terms of sacrifice, then this invention of the atom may be put to better use than it has been today. That is what Gandhiji taught. He did not say that he was going to fight the enemy with weapons. He was going to fight his enemy with his own sacrifice by

proving to his opponent that he is prepared to suffer for his cause himself, not make his opponent suffer, and I think he did achieve something in this world which will live. Christ no doubt taught religion in the sense of how the moral conduct of human being should be but Gandhiji applied those principles to achieve freedom, if I may put it that way. He invented a new method of warfare. It is this method of warfare which India wants all the world to follow. Our foreign policy today is entirely based on this principle of sacrifice so that the world knows that you suffer for a cause, you suffer for an ideal, that you are not attacking a person because you want to force on him some object which you have to achieve.

There is another point I want to talk about because Swamiji mentioned it. Lots of people have got the impression that Gandhiji was not a modern man, that he wanted us to go back to the past. I, who have been with him for well nigh 20 years, can say this is entirely wrong because Gandhiji was as modern as any modern atomic scientist is. But, all that he felt was that we cannot proceed rapidly. We had to deal with 7 hundred thousand villages. You have to bring the villagers upto the modern conception and therefore

he felt that he had to give him this spinning wheel as an example of what manual labour can do. Unfortunately, we in this country had come to a stage by which the educated classes felt that they had no value for manual labour, that they were above it, that there were others below who could do this manual labour for themselves. That is why Gandhiji often said, "I am a bungi, in the sense that I am a sweeper, that I clean the latrines of other people", in order to prove to his own people that the fundamental business of humanity is labour and if only we could understand what Gandhiji was driving at, we would not think that he was so much as he was thought to be of a man who was going to go back.

Gandhiji's ideal was not to go back but at the same time he did not want these heavy industries. He did not want all these modern appurtenances which made one nation look upon another as a prey. The nation could prey upon because scientifically this particular nation was more advanced than the other one was. That is really the present ill of the present world. If Russia looks suspiciously at the United States or the United States looks back suspiciously on Russia it is due to the fact, who has got the better weapons, who has got the better material assistance in order to overcome the

other. Once we forget that and begin to think all humanity is one, this is really the essential part of the Hindu philosophy. When you begin to think that all humanity is one, whether it is white, brown, black or yellow, then will arise the new world, the new salvation, wherein all human beings will be equal and the great message that Jesus Christ preached of brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God will really be accomplished.

Thank you (Cheers).

U. M. S. Power Press, Coimbatore U—89—83